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6709th meeting

Thursday, 26 January 2012, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Sangqu	(South Africa)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Musayev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Germany	Mr. Berger
	Guatemala	Mr. Briz Gutiérrez
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

Letter dated 17 January 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2012/42)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

Letter dated 17 January 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2012/42)

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Chad, Mali and Niger to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/42, which contains a letter dated 17 January 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Pascoe.

Mr. Pascoe: I appreciate the opportunity to brief the Security Council on the inter-agency assessment mission dispatched by the Secretary-General to look into the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region.

The mission, led by Mr. Sam Ibok, Deputy Director of the Africa II Division of the Department of Political Affairs — who is seated right behind me — took place from 7 to 23 December. It included representatives of the African Union, the International Organization for Migration and United Nations entities working in the humanitarian, development, political, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism fields.

The mission had working sessions in Mali, Niger, Chad and Mauritania. It also visited Abuja, Nigeria, where it met with senior officials of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and with Nigeria's Minister of Defence to discuss regional efforts to counter terrorism. The team also made stops in Dakar, Senegal, for guidance and debriefing with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa, Mr. Said Djinnit.

The mission found, especially among the civil and political leaders of the region, a remarkable openness to engage on the nature and enormity of the challenges confronting the countries. It was clear throughout that most of the challenges pre-dated the Libyan conflict. On the question of returnees from Libya, the topmost priority for the countries visited was to feed and to reintegrate the vulnerable returnees and to help the affected communities cope with the loss of remittances.

Underlying structural challenges and a looming food crisis in the area compound those immediate problems. There were strong appeals for the United Nations, working in tandem with the African Union and others, as well as with the new authorities in Libya, to find a mutually satisfactory framework for rebuilding relationships between the Sahel region and the countries of transit and destination.

The mission also found that the leaders of the Sahel region understood the need to protect the rights of both the migrants and the host communities, especially in the light of recent abuses. It held extensive consultations on how to promote the security, economic and employment conditions for managing labour and migration issues within the region.

The mission also recognized that greater efforts needed to be made to identify the criminal and militia elements that are reigniting the embers of past rebellions, using weapons that had been smuggled into the region from Al-Qadhafi's arsenal during the fighting in Libya. The Council will recall that Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ian Martin informed the Council yesterday that there is little evidence so far that man-portable air defence systems, or some of the other heavy weaponry, have been smuggled out of Libya in significant numbers to the subregion (see S/PV.6707).

The recommendations of Mr. Ibok's mission fall into three categories.

The first is support and capacity-building for ongoing national initiatives to address the immediate humanitarian, socio-economic and security challenges in the region, as well as for enhanced efforts by the United Nations country teams, especially in building a

more coherent approach for the implementation of humanitarian and development programmes.

The second is support for existing regional mechanisms, including capacity-building and enhanced coordination arrangements, on issues related to the control of borders and information-sharing on cross-border activity, such as the smuggling of weapons and human trafficking. This would include regional mechanisms to address the growing activities of terrorist organizations that are building networks that reach out from the Maghreb and the Sahel zone to terrorist groups like Boko Haram that are not traditionally part of the region.

The third is support at the international level. The United Nations, in cooperation with the African Union, needs to mobilize greater international support for the Sahel region to address the challenges of human insecurity and underdevelopment, as well as terrorist and security issues. Regional actors have made clear that there is an urgent need to deal with the upsurge in terrorist groups and the growing threat they pose. However, in their view, it is critically necessary to also address the socio-economic situation, including youth unemployment, the food security crisis looming over the horizon and underdevelopment. They have called for more comprehensive efforts to address the problem of drugs and weapons-smuggling, as well as the smuggling of other products, such as petroleum foodstuffs, to fund terrorist organizations.

Recent developments in the region reinforce the concerns consistently expressed to the mission by its interlocutors. The security situation in Mali has significantly worsened following heavy fighting on 17 and 18 January between Government forces and Tuareg militias in northern Mali in an area close to the borders with Niger and Algeria. The Tuareg fighters, members of the self-proclaimed Azawad National Liberation Movement, assert that they are seeking to drive the Government out of several towns in the North where Tuareg communities are dominant. The attacks come at a particularly sensitive time for Mali, with the approach of presidential and legislative elections and a major constitutional reform referendum. This is further complicated by the drought throughout the region and the worsening food situation currently affecting Mali, Niger and Chad.

In neighbouring Niger, President Mahamadou Issoufou voiced concern on 22 January over the danger of similar violence occurring in his country, and affirmed his Government's determination to avert the spread of Tuareg attacks to Niger. Although no recent attacks have been reported, there is growing concern that the resurgent Tuareg rebellion in Mali could in fact spread to Niger. The security equilibrium in the northern regions of Niger and Mali is especially volatile due to the enhanced presence and heightened activity there of the Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb group and other criminal networks that use these vast, poorly guarded and largely desert territories as safe havens and training grounds for their illicit operations.

If we are to be able to deal with the challenges in the Sahel region and to have a comprehensive, long-lasting impact, we will need to put in place a mechanism that would bring together all the affected countries and major outside actors in a coordinated manner to discuss the issues and devise solutions. Other countries in the neighbourhood outside the Sahel region certainly need to be brought into the security and development discourse.

As we all know, one of the obstacles to increased cooperation is structural. African and United Nations efforts to deal with the problems of the region are spread over many groupings and organizations. For example, Nigeria and Niger belong to ECOWAS, Chad is a member of the Economic Community of Central African States, and Mauritania and Algeria are in the Arab-Maghreb Union. In addition, none of the existing United Nations presences in the region — the United Nations Office for West Africa, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya — has a mandate that covers the broad region of the Sahel and the multiple challenges confronted by the countries concerned. Despite these limitations, we have been encouraged by the readiness of all the countries inside and outside the region, as well as regional organizations and the United Nations system, to work together to develop a more comprehensive and coherent approach.

Let me conclude by emphasizing the urgency of the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel. It is critical that the international community respond to the strong and consistent calls of the concerned countries to support ongoing initiatives. As I have noted, some of the problems are directly related to the fall of the Al-Qadhafi regime in Libya, but the mission's interlocutors emphasized that most of the

problems are long-standing ones, and current drought conditions make it obvious that the overall situation could deteriorate quickly. On 29 January, at the African Union summit, a ministerial-level meeting is planned to review this situation and to develop approaches to deal with the many problems of the region. The report of the December mission will be discussed at that meeting. We will endeavour to keep the Council informed of developments in the region as time progresses.

The President: I thank Mr. Pascoe for his briefing.

I now give the floor to those representatives of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe for his briefing on the report of the assessment mission to the Sahel (S/2012/42). The report provides a basis for discussing the challenges facing the region in the aftermath of the Libyan crisis.

Pakistan is extremely concerned at the report's conclusion that the humanitarian and economic challenges confronting the Sahel region have been exacerbated by the fallout from the Libyan crisis. The influx of returnees has placed an added burden on the already strained situation of host communities that had been facing food insecurity, shrinking economic opportunities, and lack of health and social infrastructure. This has also resulted in the loss of remittances that were so vital to the economies of these countries.

Although the report does not quantify the economic impact of these factors, what is apparent is that the countries of the Sahel have become unwitting victims of the Libyan crisis. Therefore, there is an urgent need to redress the economic impact of the crisis on these countries through an appropriate assistance package.

As regards the security impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region, the report confirms our fears that large quantities of weapons and ammunition may have been smuggled into the region from Libya, which could further fuel the activities of criminal and terrorist groups. Although there is still no confirmed evidence, man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) may also have found their way into the region. If that were the case, these weapons could fall into the hands of terrorists, with potentially devastating consequences. This should be a matter for alarm to the countries of the region, as well as to members of the Council.

It is obvious that, despite the caution advocated by some members of the Council as the crisis was unfolding in Libya, its implications were totally overlooked. The region has now been left to deal with its aftermath. Immediate steps must be taken to address the problem of the proliferation of all types of weapons. In this regard, we look forward to the report of the Panel of Experts on Libya, pursuant to paragraph 5 of resolution 2017 (2011), in particular concerning MANPADS.

The report further highlights the fact that there has been an increase in terrorist activity and organized crime in the Sahel. The possible establishment of linkages among various terrorist groups could be a destabilizing factor for the region. We support steps being taken at the national and regional levels to counter that trend. There is also a need to build the capacities of these countries to deal with these challenges.

The need for better coordination between various mechanisms for addressing the crisis in the region is underscored in the report. We would appreciate receiving more details about how the existing United Nations presence is assisting the Sahel countries. On the whole, it would have been better if the mission had restricted the scope of its work to the impact of the Libyan crisis on the region, which is of immediate concern to the Security Council. The long-term development problems and their solutions require more detailed analysis and examination by relevant agencies. The Security Council is not the appropriate body to discuss those aspects.

In conclusion, we would like to highlight one recommendation in the report that is intriguing to us. The report talks about the application of the principle of "hot pursuit". We are not aware if there is any such agreed principle in international law, and its appearance in a United Nations document is not understandable. We believe that the introduction of any such notion will have negative implications, not only for the stability of the region but also for the development of legal norms. We would therefore ask the Secretariat to remove that recommendation from the report.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Lynn Pascoe for his statement and for the assessment work that has been carried out by the United Nations, in close cooperation with the African Union and on the basis of the needs expressed by the authorities of the States of region.

The assessment report's (see S/2012/42) presentation of the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region leads to two observations, first, about the seriousness of the large number of security and humanitarian challenges in the region and, secondly, about the need for the United Nations to adopt a more integrated approach to help the States of the region to overcome those challenges. Let me turn first to the challenges for the region.

In both the humanitarian and security fronts, the States of the Sahel region face recurring problems that require addressing with greater coordination and solutions focused on the underlying issues. Population movements, which often include migrants returning to their countries of origin following the crisis in Libya, as well as the spread of weapons in the region are, as has been pointed out, additional destabilizing factors in an already fragile region.

While the problems of the Sahel clearly predate the Libyan crisis, they have nevertheless not been the object of sufficiently effective responses. Among the underlying problems are recurring food crises, acts of terrorism by Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and Boko Haram, and trafficking in weapons, drugs and even human beings — the common denominator being that they all concern issues that cross borders and, to varying degrees concern all the countries of the Sahel. Quite often, States lack the resources to address problems beyond their borders that contribute to destabilization in their region. In that regard, it is especially relevant that the Security Council address the question of the Sahel in all its aspects, which is something it has never done.

Given the cross-border threat of those threats, it is crucial that the States of region carry out cooperation in the areas of security and development, in particular when it comes to border controls. Solutions must first of all come from the States themselves. The latest ministerial conference held in Nouakchott this week shows that this process is under way. The international community should act to help by supporting the Governments of the region and providing assistance for their initiatives. The matter of the crucial role of coordination leads me to my second point, namely, the role of the United Nations.

We are convinced that the United Nations has a role to play in the Sahel. At this moment, no regional organization in Africa brings together all the countries concerned by the problems of the Sahel. Only the United Nations, by virtue of its universality and neutrality, includes all the States of the Sahel and neighbouring States of the region. It is therefore essential that the United Nations adopt a more integrated approach internally to help the States of the region in the areas of security and development. It should do so by aligning its agencies, funds and programmes to work in the same direction. Moreover, we believe that such a strategy should not entail the establishment of additional bureaucratic mechanisms. Optimally, it should rely on, and strengthen, existing structures. In that regard, we call on the Secretariat to keep the Council informed of efforts made in that regard.

I should also like to recall that in 2011 the European Union devoted significant short- and long-term budgetary resources to a strategy for the Sahel that provided for many concrete partnership projects focused on development, security and political dialogue. The European Union is therefore committed. It has appointed a coordinator and is currently placing every tool at his disposal, while making national ownership the guiding principle. In its approach, the United Nations should take into account the European Union initiative, so as to avoid pointless duplication. Only in that way, will we be able to ensure that the efforts of the United Nations are adapted to the realities on the ground and the efforts of other partners in the international community.

In conclusion, I should like to point out that France has just circulated a draft statement to the press, which we hope will later be adopted in order to demonstrate the commitment of the Security Council on this issue.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for scheduling this briefing on West Africa and the Sahel. I would also like to thank Lynn Pascoe for his briefing on the security situation in the region. I welcome the renewed international focus on this issue, which the Council will discuss again next month.

The issues affecting the countries of the Sahel are complex and have many root causes. Indeed, as Mr. Ian Martin told the Council yesterday (see S/PV.6707), many predate the Libyan conflict. Addressing those problems will require a coordinated response. We are grateful for the work of the assessment mission in bringing together States and regional bodies to share knowledge and discuss solutions. The nature of the challenges facing those countries means they will not be resolved without their working together. In that spirit, and despite recent differences, it is also vital that the United Nations, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) stand together with the countries of the Sahel.

The Council must focus its efforts where our expertise lies, that is, on issues of peace and security. We must bring to bear the expertise of the rest of the United Nations family in delivering humanitarian support to affected States.

It is clear that the Libyan crisis has impacted on the different countries of the Sahel to different degrees. However, weapons proliferation, illicit trafficking of goods and food insecurity are common challenges to them all. I would like to make three points on those issues.

First, there has undoubtedly been an upsurge in weapons proliferation across the Sahel. The main cause of that has been the gradual return to Mali and Niger of Tuareg rebels who fought for the Al-Qadhafi regime. The role of ECOWAS is crucial in mitigating the impact of that proliferation. I encourage ECOWAS to continue its efforts to deal with the challenges posed by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and to aid those displaced by the crisis to return home.

Secondly, on trafficking of illicit goods, it is clear that, regardless of events in Libya, the Sahel is seen as an attractive location for traffickers due to the low risks of monitoring and apprehension by State bodies. I welcome the regional judicial platform as a mechanism for cross-border judicial cooperation, as well as the national efforts of the affected States. But more bilateral support for capacity-building is needed if those countries are to develop the relevant institutions for tackling this issue.

Thirdly, in a region that suffers from food shortages on an annual basis, the crisis in Libya has been an exacerbating factor. We call on all Governments in the region to facilitate continued access for all humanitarian actors. In turn, the United Nations must, with its development partners and regional organizations, ensure that it coordinates its response appropriately and works with regional Governments to address long-term drivers of food insecurity.

Finally, the United Kingdom is committed to working with the Nigerian Government to support their efforts towards the effective implementation of a comprehensive strategy to tackle security threats in Nigeria. The British Government has condemned the recent terrorist attacks in Kano, where more than 200 people were killed, and is deeply concerned by the increasing number of attacks in Nigeria claimed by the Islamist sect Boko Haram.

Attacks have predominantly affected northern Nigeria, and targets over the past year have included Government institutions, security forces and places of worship, as well as international organizations. Those included an attack on a United Nations building in Abuja in August 2011, which killed 23 people.

The United Kingdom has shared expertise on counter-terrorism policy, doctrine and legal frameworks, and has provided assistance with specific capabilities, such as managing the consequences of terrorist attacks. We will continue to support Nigerians' efforts to counter terrorism in their country and the region.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): Like others, I want to thank Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe for his briefing. I would also like to place on record our appreciation for the Secretary-General's initiatives to depute an integrated technical assessment team to study the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region for the mission's comprehensive report (see S/2012/42).

Military operations carried out ostensibly for the protection of civilians have clearly resulted in millions of civilians in West and Central Africa and the Maghreb being adversely affected. The report has brought out in considerable detail the multidimensional adverse impact of the conflict in the security, economic and humanitarian areas. In a relatively short period of time, the countries of the Sahel region have had to contend with an influx of nearly half a million returnees, as well as with a large inflow of arms and ammunition. Given that each returnee supported in excess of seven individuals back home, some 3 million

people have lost their source of livelihood. The loss of remittances and high unemployment among young people have further exacerbated food insecurity and the nutrition crisis.

As the report notes, in some areas terrorist groups, including Al-Qaida, are filling the humanitarian vacuum. Additionally, the loss of tourism, the suspension of investment, increased expenditure on defence and the strain on basic social services such as health and education have all stretched the resources of Governments in the region.

Most of the countries in the Sahel region have limited institutional capacity and resources to deal with such a multitude of problems. In addition, several problems, such as the proliferation of arms, terrorism, illicit drug trafficking, border management and others, have a regional dimension and need to be tackled through regional cooperation.

We therefore support the recommendations made by the assessment team and believe that a comprehensive strategy needs to be developed and implemented at the national, regional and international levels. The primary focus of such a strategy should be to support the capacity-building of national institutions in the security and socio-economic fields. The countries concerned should implement all legal and administrative measures to combat terrorism and organized crime in accordance with resolution 1373 (2001) and other relevant regional and international instruments. United Nations agencies, including the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, should extend technical and financial support for the implementation of those measures.

At the same time, development assistance to and cooperation with the countries of the region should be expanded to support the Governments' multisectoral reintegration initiatives, with a strong focus on conflict prevention, social cohesion and protection, as well as on livelihood support for returnees. Employment-intensive development programmes will go a long way towards reintegrating returnees with the local communities and preventing them from becoming an easy catch for terrorist groups.

It is also necessary to support the regional initiatives of the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States. Technical support should be extended to them to develop coherent strategies for transnational problems. In that connection, we welcome the steps being taken by regional and subregional organizations such as ECOWAS, which include regional plans of action to address illicit drug trafficking, organized crime and drug abuse, and we believe that their reach should be expanded to cover all countries in the Sahel that have been affected by the Libyan conflict. The African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism should also be strengthened to provide for cooperation among member States and regional mechanisms.

The African Union (AU) was sidelined in the implementation of resolution 1973 (2001). The consequences of that conflict are, however, being suffered by the countries of Africa. The lesson to be learned from this is clear. The United Nations must partner with the AU in the resolution of African conflicts. With respect to the strategy for addressing the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel, the United Nations must integrate its plans with the efforts of the AU. The relevant United Nations agencies should support the regional and subregional organizations and should assist them with capacity-building and in monitoring their implementation. The United Nations offices in the region, including the United Nations Office for West Africa, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and the United Nations Office to the African Union should look into practical and concrete ways to strengthen the efforts of national Governments and regional institutions in order to enhance coherence and coordination.

The onus is on the Council to ensure that the Libyan crisis does not further exacerbate the fragile security and socio-economic conditions in the Sahel region.

Mr. Pankin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Pascoe for his thorough briefing. We recognize the great significance of the assessment mission, and in particular, as the author of the report (see S/2012/42) said, the fact that the mission took place in cooperation with regional and subregional organizations.

We carefully analysed the document and the recommendations it contains, which confirm that the consequences of the Libyan crisis, the real scope of which is only beginning to come to light, are a serious threat to security and stability in the entire region.

Moreover, the negative effect is also evident beyond its borders and not only on the African continent.

We are especially concerned by the uncontrolled spread of weapons in Libya and beyond its borders as a result of the conflict. The theft of weapons, including man-portable air defence systems (MANPADs), from Libyan army warehouses and their further trans-shipment abroad, sharply increases the risk of terrorism. That is one concrete but not exhaustive example among those that are cited in the report before us today.

That situation persists even as the Libyan authorities have no opportunity to fully control the situation in their country or to prevent weapons from falling into the hands of terrorist elements. We recall that, according to current assessments, as many as 5,000 MANPADs are unaccounted for. We must therefore conclude that, given the regional realities — military and political instability, socio-economic problems, lack of border control and smuggling — it is only a matter of time before Libyan MANPADs appear in the hands of terrorists and on the black market.

Resolution 2017 (2011), adopted upon Russia's initiative, is aimed at preventing those risks and threats, and lays the foundation for collective action by the entire international community. In that context, in interacting with regional players and in solving the problems that confront the countries of the Sahel in this post-hot phase of the Libyan crisis, it is necessary to exploit the potential of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) to support the initiatives of the Sahel countries in countering threats to their security.

Of course, full and effective implementation of resolution 2017 (2011) is very important. We look forward to the timely preparation of the report of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), which we hope will contain specific, results-oriented recommendations. Also, bearing in mind separate groundwork in the report of the assessment mission, it is our view that Secretariat entities, including the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and other United Nations agencies, will make a significant contribution to preparing materials for the Sanctions Committee.

The Sahel mission identified one other very serious problem — the mass exodus from Libya of migrants from African countries, which complicates the already complex socio-economic situation in the region. Migrants in motion can become easy prey for criminal groups, especially those advocating extremist views. We need an urgent programme to reintegrate migrants. That is a complex challenge for the Sahel countries and regional agencies.

The concerted efforts of regional authorities and the support of the international community, in particular that of the United Nations, are important to countering the threat. Coordinated action by the United Nations system, based on national priorities, is essential.

In developing a strategy to combat the consequences of the Libyan crisis, a critical and decisive role must be played by States of the region.

With respect to the report's idea of establishing some type of framework mechanism to help Sahel countries deal with security problems, decisions in that regard must be taken by the States of the region themselves, with due respect for their sovereignty.

Finally, the threats unleashed like a genie from a bottle by the Libyan conflict are the fruit of the use-of-force scenario elected by some members of the international community to resolve the Libyan conflict and of the arbitrary interpretation of the provisions of resolution 1973 (2011), which is an object lesson for us all.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Lynn Pascoe for the report he has introduced (see S/2012/42) and, at the same time, underscore the joint work carried out by the United Nations and the African Union through the assessment mission and the preparation of the report before us. It is clear proof of the necessary cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

The aspirations of the Libyan people to make their country into a democracy based on the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for its citizens ran up against the despotism of Colonel Al-Qadhafi's dictatorship. Unfortunately, the crisis unleashed by the violent response of the regime negatively affected not only the Libyan population but also neighbouring countries and the region in general.

The numerous manifestations and dimensions of the impact of the Libyan crisis on the countries of the Sahel region continue to be of concern. Therefore, we believe it necessary to take prompt action in support of the efforts and initiatives of States and regional and

subregional organizations to resolve the security problems related to the situation.

The report of the assessment team offers specific recommendations, a careful analysis of which will enable us to move forward in formulating initiatives and programmes based on the principle of national ownership, the establishment of a clear division of responsibilities among stakeholders, effective coordination and coherence in activities, and the identification of clear priorities.

A return to normalcy in Libya and a prompt economic recovery are critical if the actions of the Organization in the Sahel region are to be effective and conducive to finding sustainable solutions. The entire United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, must remain committed to achieving a prosperous and peaceful Libya, which in turn will be a factor of stability and well-being for the entire region.

As pointed out in the mission's report, the crisis in Libya further exacerbated an already precarious security situation in the Sahel region. A number of factors that threaten the stability of the countries in the subregion have deteriorated. The Organization as a whole must act to provide immediate assistance in order to resolve current problems and at the same time contribute to long-term solutions to structural problems.

Returnees and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons are among the main repercussions on which we need to focus our attention. As emphasized by the authorities of the countries of the Sahel region, the priority must be on establishing, developing and improving the capacities of national institutions and regional mechanisms to resolve these problems.

The human rights of returnees must be respected, and they must be given economic alternatives that will enable them to reintegrate themselves in their home countries. At the same time, we must promote an improvement of social conditions in the communities so that the impact of returnees on the economies of the countries in the region will be minimized, paying particular attention to the relationship between security and development.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a concern that requires decisive international cooperation to achieve a sustainable solution. Strengthening border control by providing technological and financial resources; establishing effective judicial cooperation agreements; the monitoring, marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons; exchange of information and assistance in implementing applicable international norms in this area are specific areas where we must prioritize our action in order to prevent an exacerbation of these risk factors that could further threaten the security of the States in the region.

The magnitude of the threats to security in the countries of the subregion described in the report requires the adoption of initiatives that recognize the nexus between development and security in the countries of the subregion. Such strategies will also require the leadership of national authorities and close cooperation with the international stakeholders, in particular the United Nations through its offices to the African Union, in Western Africa and Central Africa, as well as such regional and subregional actors as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States.

Mr. Berger (Germany): First of all, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Pascoe for his briefings to the Security Council on the situation in the Sahel. I would also like to welcome the report of the assessment mission to the region (see S/2012/42).

The report confirms a worrying picture of the situation in the Sahel region and related security, economic and humanitarian concerns. Responding to the crisis, Germany is currently carrying out financial and technical cooperation projects in the region in the amount of approximately $10 million. We are particularly concerned that the underlying structural problems pre-dating the conflict in Libya — mainly underdevelopment, migration and climate-related effects — have not or not sufficiently been addressed.

A first analysis of the existing national and regional measures to tackle those issues shows the need for enhanced cooperation among the affected States in the region and a better coordination of the international community's assistance. Measures to overcome those shortcomings should address both immediate requirements and the structural deficits. They should include support for the ongoing initiatives of Governments in the region and the strengthening of existing regional mechanisms.

Continuous dialogue with countries like Algeria and Nigeria in security matters is important. Cooperation mechanisms with the new authorities in

Libya should be further strengthened. All international activities to destroy and control weapons in Libya, to which Germany contributes, are highly relevant. Renewed interest in regional cooperation among the Maghreb countries might also offer new perspectives.

At the same time, the coordination of the different and ongoing United Nations activities in the region should be improved. Such measures to address different shortcomings should also be conceived in consideration of the European Union Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel. That Strategy, which focuses mainly on Mali, Mauritania and Niger, combines development and security issues and will be funded with an additional €150 million. The Strategy will be implemented in close cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union.

In that regard, we welcome the fact that the African Union participated in the United Nations joint assessment mission, and we appreciate the work done by the mission. We feel that in the future, the United Nations Office for West Africa, which is already working closely with many countries of the region, could increase its focus on security threats in the whole Sahel area.

In order to create added value to initiatives already under way, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General could contribute to encouraging regional cooperation among the Sahel countries in the fight against terrorism and organized crime, in close coordination with concerned African regional organizations, especially ECOWAS, and other international partners.

Finally, I would like to welcome the inclusion of the topic of the impacts of climate change on the security environment in the report of the assessment mission. We support the draft press statement submitted by the representative of France.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Pascoe for his briefing.

The Libyan conflict has had a serious impact on the political, security, economic and humanitarian situation in the Sahel region. The large-scale return of foreign nationals has created heavy economic and social burdens for the countries in the region. The proliferation of weapons has further encouraged cross-border organized crime and terrorism in the region. The negative impact of the Libyan situation will continue to grow, posing a sustained threat to peace and stability in the region. China expresses its grave concern in this regard.

In order to eliminate those negative impacts, the countries of the region have made positive efforts to assist their own nationals to return and integrate into local communities, and have worked to strengthen border control and cooperation in justice and law enforcement. The Economic Community of West African States and other subregional organizations have made full use of existing mechanisms in coordinating the relevant efforts of the countries in the region. China expresses its appreciation in this regard.

In the process of addressing the Libyan issue, the concerns of Africans should receive due attention. Africa's views should be duly respected. The negative impact of the Libyan conflict should not be shouldered by Africa alone. The international community should provide active assistance to the countries and organizations of the region, seriously consider and effectively implement the relevant recommendations of the report of the assessment mission (see S/2012/42), and in that process enhance communication with the countries and regional organizations. Relevant United Nations agencies should give full play to their respective expertise to gain more international support for the region.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General Pascoe for his briefing. The United States would also like to thank Special Representative Djinnit for his continued leadership in the United Nations Office for West Africa and in the Sahel region. We greatly appreciate the work that went into the United Nations inter-agency mission to the Sahel and its subsequent report (see S/2012/42).

The report provides a significant number of recommendations for our collective consideration, and while they are all worthy of deliberation, today I will focus specifically on those that relate to arms proliferation and terrorism, the humanitarian situation and food insecurity.

While there have been measured successes, we remain concerned about the threats posed by the illicit trafficking of arms and by terrorism, and we welcome the recommendations on those challenges put forth in the report of the assessment mission. We concur that

we must address the situation at the national, regional and international levels through an overarching framework that includes all of the affected countries. The United Nations, along with the African Union and other relevant organizations, could play a greater role in coordinating those efforts.

We will continue to promote improved regional efforts to combat arms proliferation and terrorism, and we will tailor our assistance to facilitate that process. For example, we are fully committed to working actively in the Global Counter-terrorism Forum Sahel regional capacity-building working group, which we co-chair. Additionally, we are engaged in capacity-building efforts to fight terrorism through the Trans Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership, which is designed to support partner efforts to contain and marginalize terrorist organizations.

Terrorist operators in the Sahel region, such as Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), continue to concern us. AQIM has demonstrated its ability to carry out criminal activities and attacks against soft targets across significant distances. AQIM has also solidified camps in isolated areas in northern Mali. We are also deeply concerned about violence attributed to Boko Haram.

Sahelian countries are making progress in their counter-terrorism capabilities. Algeria, Mali, Mauritania and Niger have increased pressure on AQIM and developed more effective regional responses to deal with the threat. Additionally, Chad has increased efforts to disrupt AQIM attempts to transit its territory.

We recognize that the Libyan crisis has brought a new set of cross-border challenges relating to security, including increased illicit weapons trafficking, that pose a threat to the stability of the region and must be addressed. We are concerned about the porous nature of the border between Chad, Niger and Libya, and the risk of weapons — including man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) — moving across those borders. Those weapons in the hands of terrorists could further destabilize already fragile areas of the Sahel and surrounding regions.

My Government, in cooperation with the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Canada, France, Italy and Germany, is currently expanding assistance efforts for weapons security, which will help to survey and inventory all known weapons and ammunition storage sites in Libya and destroy MANPADS and other weapons and munitions, as approved by the Libyan authorities. We urge regional Governments to support the Government of Libya's efforts to identify, secure and destroy loose MANPADS and other light weapons, which are at risk of being smuggled across the Libyan border into the Sahel region. Furthermore, we fully support the efforts of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya to engage on this issue, including its critical work with Libyan and other relevant officials on border security.

The report of the assessment mission cites a growing concern regarding the humanitarian and economic impacts the crisis has had on the Sahel region. The impacts are serious and demand the continued attention of the international community. We are interested in hearing ideas for how the United Nations and regional organizations can strengthen their efforts to alleviate these challenges and prevent further humanitarian crises from emerging.

The United States has worked to facilitate the return of African migrants from Libya. Last year we provided more than $27 million through the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for returnees from Libya. We note that the report recommends support for IOM's continued efforts to assist Governments of the region with the reintegration of their citizens, and we urge Governments to help in this time of need.

Regarding food insecurity, we agree with the report's recommendation that greater steps need to be taken to address the deteriorating food situation in the region in both the short and long terms. UNICEF is warning that more than 1 million children across the Sahel may face severe malnutrition in 2012. We recognize that the return of individuals from Libya into the Sahel only exacerbates the issue. Families now have more mouths to feed in a situation where food security is becoming more problematic and remittances have decreased.

The United States is mobilizing resources to address the food shortfalls. Last year, we provided over $23 million in humanitarian assistance to affected communities in the Sahel for agriculture and food security, economic recovery and nutrition programmes. In addition, we provide close to $77 million a year for food assistance, economic recovery and livelihood support in the Sahel. At the end of last year, the United States made an additional $58 million pledge to the

World Food Programme (WFP) in Chad and a $7.5 million contribution to WFP in Niger, as well as over $2 million to Catholic Relief Services in Mali, to meet the emergency food needs of more than half a million people in the region.

We must all keep in mind the potential humanitarian crises that could emerge should the region become destabilized and terrorists able to operate with impunity. My Government is working with the leaders of the Sahel countries to address that challenge through a number of political, social and economic reform efforts, including managing successful democratic transitions and countering terrorism, and we look forward to the Council's continued vigilance on these complex issues.

Mr. Cabral (Portugal): Let me start by thanking Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe for his briefing and for outlining the main aspects of the report of the assessment mission (see S/2012/42). The report is in our opinion a very good basis for a serious reflection on the nature and scope of the problems affecting the Sahel region, as well as on how to ensure multisectoral and integrated responses from the international community.

As the report clearly states, problems in the Sahel pre-date the Libyan crisis and have, for some time now, deserved the attention of the international community. As a clear example of the linkage between security and development, the situation in Libya has not altered the nature of the crisis in the Sahel, even though it has exacerbated existing challenges in States with limited re-ponse capacities, mainly through the sudden influx of large numbers of returnees and the proliferation of weapons and ammunition.

Out of its concern over the risk that proliferation of weapons and ammunitions presents to the stability and security of both Libya and the Sahel, the Security Council adopted resolution 2017 (2011), which tasks the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) to submit a report to the Council on the proposals to counter this threat. The report is expected in March.

In resolution 2022 (2011), the Security Council reinforced the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) mandate in this field. We believe that the integrated concept that guided the assessment mission should also apply to these various initiatives and ensure that they complement each other in the most effective way.

The report identifies a number of national and regional measures that could improve the situation throughout the region and address a number of concerns. Libya is still in a post-revolutionary transition phase. We hope that the stabilization of the country, its economic recovery and regional reintegration will have a positive impact throughout the Sahel.

Therefore, it is essential that the international community and the Council support the Libyan authorities in successfully addressing a number of pressing concerns and challenges. Among those are the adoption of a migration law that also tackles the many issues afflicting African migrant workers in Libya; the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed groups, together with the creation of professional security and military forces; and the establishment of an effective border management system. Another important step would be for Libya to participate in the various regional initiatives dealing with cross-border and transversal problems in the Sahel region.

On the specific case of organized crime and terrorism networks, the report already includes useful data on existing trends. However, we must further develop our understanding of the linkages and overlaps between different forms of organized crime, and between organized crime networks and terrorist groups operating in the region. Are they necessarily juxtaposed? Are there conflicts over resources? How have the recruitment strategies of terrorist groups evolved recently? We believe that these and other questions call for integrated threat analysis, linking concerns related to conflict prevention, State-building and terrorism-prevention efforts.

The United Nations system should, in our opinion, take a more proactive, rather than reactive, approach to extremism and terrorism issues, making a more creative use of existing tools, including the special political missions. We very much endorse the approach chosen to link the various dimensions of the problem and to address the root causes of instability in the Sahel region. Some of those problems require quick responses, as they may potentially expand beyond the region or aggravate an already serious humanitarian and security situation, but others require long-term strategies and instruments.

We think, therefore, that any follow-up to the report should clearly identify which measures may have an immediate effect — for instance, on humanitarian assistance, arms proliferation or border control — and which ones work essentially in the long run, especially those aimed at economic recovery, youth employment and capacity-building. Such measures will help us in understanding how the different types of measures can best be employed and combined to promote sustainable development and security in the region.

The problems identified here are also cross-border and therefore cannot be tackled by national responses alone. We value the efforts of individual countries, but the emphasis should be clearly placed on the development of regional capacities. There are already regional action plans approved by regional organizations — namely, the African Union and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) — which should be put into practice to deal with the problems affecting the Sahel. We should also encourage bilateral and multilateral ad hoc arrangements between Sahel countries for pooling resources of border control and combating terrorism and organized crime. In this respect, we believe that United Nations regional offices — the United Nations Office for West Africa and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa — and the relevant United Nations missions in the region can play a key role in bringing together the relevant actors and promoting concrete initiatives.

Coherence among the various initiatives of international support for the Sahel region should also be among our central concerns. I would mention, in particular, the European Union Strategy for the Sahel, which seeks to link the security and development dimensions through a number of measures that, to a large extent, coincide with those mentioned in the report. Creating mechanisms of coordination that encompass this and other international initiatives would certainly contribute to avoiding duplication and to a more efficient use of international support.

Continued instability in the Sahel has implications that go far beyond the countries most directly affected. Therefore, from the perspective of the United Nations continued involvement in monitoring the situation and the impact of these challenges in the Sahel and in the wider region that stretches from the Atlantic to the Indian Oceans, we look forward to the Council debate on transnational challenges in the Sahel and the wider West African region, scheduled for February under the Togolese presidency. On our side, Portugal stands ready to continue to contribute to international efforts, here in New York and in other forums in which Portugal participates, aimed at promoting a more collaborative and integrated approach to the challenges faced in the Sahel region.

Mr. Briz Gutiérrez (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Lynn Pascoe for his briefing.

The situation in the Sahel region was of great concern to my delegation even before the impact of the Libyan crisis last year. We therefore welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General to dispatch a mission to the Sahel to assess the impact of the Libyan crisis and the security situation in the Sahel region.

We also welcome the support that the assessment mission received from the countries of the region, particularly the authorities of the five countries visited and from relevant regional organizations, particularly the Economic Community of West African States and United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA). We commend the commitment of the Governments of the countries affected by the Libyan crisis, which are already taking steps to address the security and humanitarian challenges.

The Sahel region has become a corridor in which illegal activities — including drug trafficking, the trafficking of small arms and light weapons, terrorism and transnational organized crime — are on the rise, exacerbating existing socio-economic challenges in a region in which most countries are listed as least developed countries. In addition, the Sahel region is facing extreme drought and flooding as a result of climate change. For all these reasons, my delegation believes that the United Nations should support all efforts to assist the countries in the Sahel that share these cross-border challenges and seriously consider the situation in the Sahel, including the recommendations of the assessment mission.

Regarding the humanitarian situation, Guatemala is concerned that, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 20 million people in the Sahel require humanitarian assistance, particularly in Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad. We believe that early warning systems to prevent a food and nutrition crisis need to be strengthened. It is important that all donor countries

maintain their support for humanitarian activities provided through OCHA, and for the strategy on preparedness for a food crisis in the Sahel, launched by the inter-agency standing committee in Dakar on 15 December 2011.

As to the security situation, we are concerned by the proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms and other weapons, drug trafficking, and the expansion and actions of terrorist groups. Guatemala agrees with the conclusion of the report (see S/2012/42) that most countries in the Sahel region cannot address on their own the threat of transnational organized crime, in particular the activities of such terrorist groups as Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and Boko Haram.

Of course, we support the strengthening of existing security mechanisms and strategies at the regional level. What is new here is not the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, which was already taking place in the region, but the type of weapons that are in circulation now — no longer just small arms but also heavy weapons such as shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles, whose greater destructive power increases the risk to the entire region. The weapons reported to be coming out of Libya are, given the proximity of the borders, circulating throughout the Sahel region and could easily fall into the hands of the criminal and terrorist groups operating in the area.

We deem it urgent to effectively implement Security Council resolution 2017 (2011) and for UNOWA and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya to continue their communication and cooperation.

We should also continue to support the countries of the Sahel region in complying with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council aimed at combating terrorism, in particular resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1624 (2005), and implement the United Nations Global Counter-terrorism Strategy, adopted in 2006.

In conclusion, the economic crisis, migration, drug trafficking, arms trafficking, organized crime and terrorism have been exacerbated by the crisis in Libya and could take root in the Sahel region, creating a lethal scenario of insecurity and instability at a time when the region is facing an economic contraction brought on by various factors.

We therefore believe that the Security Council should consider the recommendations of the report of the assessment mission, especially those identified as of immediate importance, at the national, regional and international levels, and thus contribute to strengthening the capacity of the United Nations system to assist countries of the Sahel region on security issues.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): Like other speakers, I would like to welcome Mr. Pascoe and thank him for his briefing.

We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his initiative to deploy the United Nations inter-agency assessment mission to the Sahel region, as well as for the comprehensive report (see S/2012/42) that the mission has submitted. We are encouraged by the fact that that initiative was widely appreciated and that the mission found among the civil and political leaders of the region a remarkable openness to engage on the challenges confronting them.

The analysis carried out by the mission with respect to the political, security, humanitarian and socio-economic implications of the crisis in Libya for neighbouring countries are illustrative of the need to strengthen cooperation, including through the development of a common approach to the Sahel region. We agree with the mission's view that any immediate long-term strategy to mitigate the impact of the Libyan crisis should take into account the root causes of the problems in the region. The recommendations of the mission in that regard require serious consideration.

It is commendable that the countries of the region have established a number of national and regional programmes and mechanisms to address the security concerns in the region. At the same time, as the mission concluded, most of the countries in the region cannot overcome threats in isolation. Therefore, the initiatives undertaken by the Governments of the countries affected, as well as the efforts of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States and other relevant organizations, should be supported by the United Nations and the broader international community.

Serious attention should be given to appeals from Sahel countries, which need capacity-building and funds to counter the threats and address the challenges. The destabilizing effects on the region of the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons requires particular consideration, apart from the direct impact on the security situation in the countries of the Sahel.

Nor should we underestimate the risk of the spread of weapons beyond the region, with the potential of their falling into the hands of terrorists and separatists in other parts of the world.

We would also like to support the mission's recommendation on the need for inter-community and inter-religious dialogue, which, in our view, takes on additional importance against the background of the efforts being made towards peace, security and stability in the region.

It is obvious that success will be dependent on greater coherence among all stakeholders. It is therefore important and commendable that, in spite of the varied regional membership, all of the countries are willing to work in a more coordinated manner.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to thank Mr. Lynn Pascoe for his detailed and, as usual, very clear briefing.

This first Council debate on such a sensitive area as the Sahel is very important to the stability and security of a number of African subregions. It is very timely, given the alarming events that have taken place recently in the Sahelo-Sahara region. The analyses and recommendations contained in the report (see S/2012/42) presented by the Under-Secretary-General outline key modalities for supporting national, regional and international efforts aimed at finding sustainable solutions to the many challenges facing that area.

Given that it is located both in the Maghreb and in the Sahelo-Sahara region, Morocco is naturally directly concerned by the threats emanating from the Sahel region and is therefore following very closely the developments in that part of our continent.

The up-tick in the number of attacks and kidnappings carried out by Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, the increase in the number of terrorist attacks perpetrated by Boko Haram, the re-emergence of old rebel movements, the proliferation of all types of weapons and trafficking of all kinds all are sources of concern on which all the States of the region and the rest of the international community must seriously focus.

The security challenges emanating from the Sahelo-Sahara region are not new. For several years now, that region has been facing an unprecedented resurgence in the activities of transnational organized crime networks and terrorist groups.

More recently, the major transatlantic drug-trafficking networks have gradually transformed the Gulf of Guinea and West Africa into a transit and redistribution area, from which hard drugs are shipped through certain Sahel countries, destined for Europe and for countries in the Maghreb countries and the Middle East. The dangerous developments in the Sahelo-Sahara region are the result of the confluence of many interlinked structural and cyclical factors.

The situation is the result of the difficulties faced by the States of the region in securing their borders and of the increased poverty in certain areas of the Sahara, which provides an incentive to resort to criminal activities for survival purposes. That combination of factors has enabled rebel armed groups, secessionist movements and many transnational organized crime networks and terrorist groups, including Al-Qaida, in the Islamic Maghreb, to take up residence there and create grey areas.

The situation was recently exacerbated by the Libyan crisis, whose effects continue to be felt in many Sahelo-Saharan countries in terms of security but also, and especially, at the humanitarian and socio-economic levels.

A number of commendable initiatives at the national, bilateral and regional levels were undertaken with a view to providing solutions to the challenges in the Sahel well before the Libyan crisis. Unfortunately, those initiatives have not enabled us to date to address the problem in a holistic, inclusive and coordinated manner.

The time has come for enhanced regional cooperation on the part of all States in the region. We hope that the international community, led by the United Nations, will devote greater attention to the situation by providing solutions to the structural problems relating to secessionist armed movements or groups, which perpetuate the existence of the grey zones, thereby facilitating the proliferation of terrorist and criminal activities.

United Nations bodies and agencies in the region have a key role to play in building the capacities of States of the region to combat terrorism and transnational organized crime.

Given the alarming facts linked to the proliferation of weapons, it is clear that regional cooperation is necessary among the countries of North

Africa and between that subregion and West Africa. Moreover, the strengthening ties among transnational organized crime networks, in particular, drug networks coming from the Atlantic Ocean and armed or terrorist groups in the Sahel, are a serious threat to international stability and security.

The international community should also give special attention to the humanitarian and socio-economic challenges facing the States of the Sahel, in particular owing to recurring food security problems and in the light of the recent return of migrant workers from Libya to their country of origin.

My country supports the recommendation in the report of the assessment mission that the United Nations should develop an integrated strategy that addresses the security, humanitarian and development challenges in the Sahel region in a consistent and comprehensive way in the medium and long term. My country fully supports the idea of creating a regional cooperation platform for the Sahel region, as set out in the report. That cooperation mechanism should be transregional in nature and scope, involving all countries of the Arab Maghreb and the Sahel, as well as any other relevant country of West or Central Africa, with the cooperation of the United Nations and international partners.

Finally, my delegation fully supports the draft press statement proposed by France on this issue.

Mr. Menan (Togo) (*spoke in French*): The Togolese delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his timely initiative to dispatch an assessment mission on the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region. It welcomes the report (S/2012/42) of the mission that Mr. Lynn Pascoe has just presented. The inter-agency composition of the mission demonstrates the importance that the United Nations attaches to the topic under consideration in the context of regional and international peace and security.

Over the past two decades, the once stable Sahel region has become an area where insecurity is rife owing to acts of terrorism and trafficking in drugs, weapons, goods and humans — in short, all the elements of organized crime. Since the region borders West Africa, the scourge has rapidly spread there. While the leaders of the region took bold measures to combat that scourge, the Libyan crisis arose and exacerbated the situation. The true impact of that crisis has been clearly established by the assessment team, since it identified several sectors that have suffered, such as the political, security, humanitarian and development spheres. In short, all the foundations of the State have been affected.

In addition to the foregoing issues are the already chronic and recurrent problems of the region, such as drought, famine and malnutrition. The Libyan crisis has therefore exacerbated the region's problems. The return of migrant workers to their countries and provinces of origin completely impoverished, people fleeing the fighting, refugees in neighbouring countries and the freer movement of all types of weapons in the region are new challenges now facing the Sahel countries and the entire region.

One such challenge remaining is the population growth of countries, which has a direct consequence on housing, schooling and the availability of farmland. To that, one can add the terrorist acts of the Organization of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and Boko Haram, as well as increased transnational organized crime. Together, those challenges put political pressure on Governments and have a direct and dangerous impact on the peace, security and stability in the countries concerned.

In the view of the delegation of Togo, all those issues require prompt action to prevent the Sahel region from sinking into complete insecurity, which would be very damaging to its development. In that regard, the recommendations made by the assessment team to prevent the spread of conflicts, the destabilization of States and worsening humanitarian problems deserve close attention. In that regard, the international community should provide economic and financial support to the countries of the region and help them to develop economic and social reintegration programmes.

It is generally recognized that when States face serious insecurity issues, respect for human rights takes second place. The efforts of the United Nations should also address the human rights component and urge Governments to fully respect such rights in combating insecurity and terrorism.

The States of the region are making great individual efforts to deal with the situation. Strengthening the capacity of security personnel, increasing border controls and other targeted measures are part of that committed struggle. However, Togo believes that regional and international cooperation should be one of the effective tools for combating the

situation. The ease with which criminals and other highway bandits communicate and move from one country to another requires the establishment of multifaceted cooperation in order to make it possible for the various initiatives undertaken to achieve the anticipated goals.

To that end, my country welcomes the ongoing cooperation among the Economic Community of West African States, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa in the context of combating those new threats to peace and security in the region.

By acting together, the international community can overcome organized crime in the Sahel. Togo firmly believes that the Security Council should play a decisive role to that end in the coming months. Togo also supports the draft press statement that the French delegation has proposed to the Council.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of South Africa.

We wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Mr. Pascoe for his briefing statement on the report of the inter-agency assessment mission on the impact of the Libyan conflict and how it has been handled in the neighbouring Sahel region (see S/2012/42).

The report confirms South Africa's long-held view that the manner in which resolution 1973 (2011) was implemented in the Libyan conflict was going to have dire consequences for the countries in the region. South Africa is deeply concerned that the proliferation of lethal arms in Libya, and in the Sahel in general, will no doubt take a long time to address in a comprehensive manner. There is no denying the fact that the region has for some time had its own challenges, but the manner in which the outbreak of the conflict in Libya was approached further compounded the problems of the region.

Of further concern to South Africa is the increase in criminal and terrorist activities in the region, as evidenced in the recent concentration of terrorist groups and extremists in the region. The amassing of arms and ammunition is a real concern in that regard and the heightened activities of groups such as Boko Haram are further testament to that.

What started as a conflict in one country has now spilled over to become a regional problem with unprecedented consequences. The international community should therefore take responsibility and not leave the people and Governments of the region to deal with these challenges, including the scourge of terrorism, alone.

We support the recommendations for a multi-pronged approach to the problems at the national, regional and international levels, in particular regarding the need for close cooperation and collaboration between the United Nations and the African Union (AU). This would be a practical application of cooperation and coordination envisaged under resolution 2033 (2012), which was adopted recently by the Council.

It is unfortunate that the zeal of some members of the international community to resolve the Libyan crisis militarily ignored our warning of consequences too dire to contemplate, which have now placed that region and Africa in their current quagmire. We should avoid easy answers and claiming that the Sahel has always faced such challenges, when in actual fact it is well known that they were not previously of this magnitude.

It is clear from the report that the joint collaborative efforts of the United Nations and the AU were well received by the leadership and peoples of the countries visited by the assessment mission. South Africa has repeatedly emphasized the need for a strategic political process to resolve the crisis in Libya and beyond that would include the central role of the AU. The report shows that clear political will exists among the States of the subregion to find common solutions to their common problems.

Looking forward, we would urge the United Nations system to address these challenges in a coherent and integrated manner, working in partnership with these countries in accordance with their national and subregional structures. The international community, through the coordination provided by the United Nations system, has an important role to play in facilitating support and technical assistance in the various areas identified in the report. These systemic interventions, managed in an integrated and coherent manner, will constitute an investment in the long-term stability of the subregion.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I call on the representative of Niger.

Mr. Boureima (Niger) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you most warmly, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for January. I also wish to thank you for having organized today's briefing on the long-awaited report of the assessment mission on the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region (S/2012/42).

I also wish to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for having yet again demonstrated the special interest he takes in Africa as a whole, and the Sahel region in particular. Furthermore, we thank Mr. Lynn Pascoe for his excellent briefing.

We believe that the assessment team is to be truly commended. Indeed, its report clearly identifies not only the problems that have been caused or exacerbated in the Sahel region by the Libyan crisis, but also the appropriate measures for addressing them. The mission has also made some relevant recommendations to the national authorities of the region and to the international community as a whole. The mission, while noting national and regional efforts, nevertheless stresses the need for significant international support in order to achieve positive results in mitigating the effects of the Libyan crisis on the region and in combating the rampant scourges there.

It has been recognized since the 2005 World Summit that there is a link between development and security, and we therefore need a comprehensive and integrated approach to meeting these challenges, in particular in the Sahel region, which suffers problems of such scope and origins that the international community is compelled to dedicate the resources — in particular, the financial resources — necessary to resolving them. At the same time, while recognizing the efforts of many of our partners, we truly hope for more solidarity and commitment on the part of all.

Niger is doing its utmost at the international and regional levels. For instance, on 22 and 23 January we held an international forum on security and development in the Sahelo-Saharan region of Niger in order to raise awareness of our security and development strategy there. The strategy is accompanied by a budget, with which we call on the international community to assist.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Mali.

Mr. Daou (Mali) (*spoke in French*): Like my colleague and friend from Niger, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your outstanding presidency of the Council, and to express my delegation's pleasure at taking part in this meeting.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his initiative to deploy to the countries of the Sahel an inter-agency assessment mission on the impact of the Libyan crisis on the region. My country greatly appreciates the sustained attention that he devotes to the Sahara-Sahel region, which has for some time experienced a security situation that is both complex and worrisome.

Mali, which was one of the countries that hosted the United Nations mission, takes note of the report (see S/2012/42) that has just been introduced by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. We also take note of the recommendations made by the assessment mission aimed at supporting national, regional and international initiatives. Nevertheless, allow me to make some additional comments.

I would like first to underscore that the report repeats erroneous statements made by insignificant individuals and small groups who have scorned the spirit of openness and dialogue espoused by Mali's highest officials and opted for violence as a way to pursue their claims. Mali is an old nation and a land of hospitality, dialogue and tolerance. Mali is also a country that respects cultural diversity, democratic principles and individual and collective rights and freedoms. However, the Government of Mali will tolerate no act aimed at eroding the unity and integrity of its national territory.

As clearly underscored by the report, the Libyan crisis has had serious repercussions on neighbouring countries, especially those of the Sahel region, including Mali, which has had to face huge numbers of returning indigent migrants and heavily armed former combatants.

It goes without saying that the presence of armed groups serves to fuel old ambitions, just as the spread of weapons and munitions of all sorts have exacerbated insecurity and severely tested peace, stability and security in the Sahara-Sahel strip.

Mali is fully aware of the scope and complexity of the current challenges. We remain convinced that responding to them entails not just strengthening the

military presence in the affected regions in order to combat terrorism, cross-border crime and all manner of trafficking, but also protecting people and their property, improving basic infrastructure and public services and promoting development efforts at the local level. The many initiatives put in place by the Government are a response to that. Those include the special programme for peace, security and development in northern Mali and the shared governance programme for peace and security in Mali.

At the regional level, we should welcome the fruitful cooperation that exists between the countries concerned. I would like to underscore that it is they that have the primary responsibility to ensure peace, stability and security in the Sahel.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight here the urgent need for the United Nations and the African Union to help mobilize increased international assistance for affected countries of the Sahel in order that they can strengthen their capacities to overcome the current challenges.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Chad.

Mr. Tchingonbe Patchanne (Chad) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time that my country takes the floor, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a happy new year, Mr. President, as well as to all our colleagues here. I also wish to commend the efforts made by the team of experts that carried out an assessment mission on the impact of the Libyan crisis on the countries of the Sahel region.

As the Council is aware, thanks to its huge oil resources, before the crisis Libya was a country that drew migrant workers of various nationalities. My country, Chad, is one of the countries of the Sahel region with a large number of its nationals living in Libya. Today, more than 80 per cent of them have been able to return to their country thanks to the support of the International Organization for Migration, which I would like to thank for its dedication to humanitarian concerns.

Chad attaches great interest to the conclusions and recommendations of the mission, and we welcome the fact that the Secretary-General decided to establish it. We would also like the Council to devote to the report all the attention it deserves, so as to prompt the international community to lend its support to the countries of the Sahel region in order that they can win the war against underdevelopment, famine, poverty and insecurity.

With regard to the circulation of weaponry in the Sahel region and the threat it poses to its countries, His Excellency President Idriss Deby Itno sounded the alarm even before the fall of the Al-Qadhafi regime. Nevertheless, the situation continues to be one of concern given the long border separating our two countries, over which it is difficult to exercise control.

All those challenges that the countries of the region must face are made worse by the impact of the Libyan crisis.

The President: I would like once again to thank Mr. Lynn Pascoe for his briefing to the Council today.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.